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ABSTRACT

Many teachers attempt to ignore value questions in the social studies classroom, emphasizing intellectual development alone. Through actions and selection of topics and materials, however, a teacher suggests that he believes in certain ideas and events and, therefore, teaches values. The key issue here is not whether values should be taught, but rather, the justification of certain values over others to be taught and the decision on how to teach them. Values, defined as concepts in the minds of men which are reflected in specific value claims made by individuals, represent the quality of worth or merit which men place on various aspects of their experience and by which they judge that experience. Students need to understand the difference between personal, market, and real value claims, and how to know that the latter assert that a given thing is better than other conceivable and available alternatives according to a particular set of criteria. Moral value claims represent a particular kind of real value claim. Students can be taught the meaning of justice and its potential usefulness as a universally applicable principle, and need to empathize with the feelings of others. Value education includes both cognitive and affective components. (Author/SJM)

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VALUES

DO WE OR DON'T WE TEACH THEM?*

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Despite a fairly large amount of recent writing and speechmaking about the importance of value analysis and development in social studies education, my experience suggests that the explicit consideration of value questions in social studies classrooms is largely ignored. The reasons for this are many and varied. Many teachers regard questions of value as essentially private matters with which they should not interfere. Others, believing that values should be "caught" rather than taught, question the propriety of any program specifically designed for their development. Besides, they argue, the family, church or other institution is best equipped to deal with such matters. Some feel that any attempt on the part of teachers to influence the values of the young in any way smacks of totalitarianism or "brain washing". Some admit freely that their primary concern lies in "trying to get the subject matter across" without having to worry about values. And many, of course, do not understand how to proceed. It is discouraging to talk with teachers (and many social studies educators!) and find that many have considerable trouble in distinguishing questions of fact from questions of value; that most are hazy as to what a value judgment is; and that almost all have a

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very difficult time identifying how facts and values relate to the making of ethical choices (i.e., choices involving what is right or wrong in a particular situation.)

Some form of value education, however, is unavoidable. All of us engage in valuing. And teachers, whether they are conscious of it cr not, teach values. A teacher's actions, sayings, discussion topics, choice of reading assignments and materials, class activities, and examinations suggests that he believes certain ideas, events, individuals, or other phenomena are more important than others for students to consider. Indications of value are suggested all the time in social studies classrooms: "...in the problems that are chosen to be discussed, in the manner in which they are discussed, in the historical documents and events that are emphasized, as well as in the leaders that are chosen to illustrate the important and the worthy and the unimportant and the unworthy in the affairs of man. (1) The social studies, by their very nature, incorporate certain special values of their own. The "attempt to be objective, to look at oneself or one's own group dispassionately; to recognize how stubborn the diversities between different individuals and between different groups are; to distrust simple formulas and simple solutions in the government of human affairs." (2, p. 35).

In most cases, of course, whatever value education there is in a given social studies unit or course occurs implicitly (e.g.,

through the accidental use of certain books and materials) rather than explicitly through careful planning and design. Much of the fault for this lack of consistent and explicit attention to values lies with the university professor and curriculum developer. University professors--in the main, have spent far too little time in developing a comprehensive, coherent rationale for social studies education, of which values education is a part, and training pre-and in-service teachers to think in terms of such a rationale. Curriculum developers and materials designers have far too often concentrated on developing materials which emphasized concepts, generalizations and "inquiry" while ignoring a systematic treatment of value questions and value analysis. If one reviews the contents of various social studies journals over the last ten years or so, one finds articles about involving students in inquiry, about teaching history using original documents, about how to teach about Asia or Africa, about the new social studies, about how important it is to involve students in public issues. Rarely indeed does one read or hear about an attempt to develop and build upon a total conception of social studies education with such things as techniques, strategies and type of content fitted in as components.

My colleague at San Francisco State, Morris Lewenstein, puts the point even more forcefully: "At the present time, social studies education itself is not a discipline. Those of us who are in it cannot even agree on what are the most important questions to which we

should be seeking answers. We have no agreed upon goals, no parameters, and there seem to be few evident logical connections between the problems we as individuals are seeking solutions to or the general propositions we are seeking to establish. We not only have no generally accepted theories which can be useful for relating the findings of research in one curriculum project to those of another, we have not yet established a common language which might help in the development of such a theory." (3,pp 1-2). In large part, we meta-educators have only ourselves to blame if many teachers continue to place most of their instructional emphasis upon intellectual development alone rather than trying to deal systematically with values.* You may feel that these thoughts are severe. I suppose they are. But I wish to suggest that it is high time for more of us to begin working on a comprehensive rationale for the social studies and to begin educating teachers to think in terms of such a rationale. A fundamental question facing the profession with regard to such a task involves the nature of values education. What I wish to suggest in the remainder of this paper is that the key issue is not whether values should be taught. We cannot avoid teaching values. A more fundamental concern involves the justification of certain values to be taught and deciding how to teach them.

What is a Value?

Values are concepts. Like all concepts, they do not exist in experience, but in the minds of men. They represent the quality of

*It must be admitted of course that Professors of social studies education and curriculum developers have not been exactly encouraged by legislators and the general public to deal with value development. Many of the reasons given earlier as to the hesitance of teachers in this regard apply as well to members of the Congress, State legislatures and the public at large.

worth or merit which men place on various aspects of their experience, and by which they judge that experience.

Values are not things. They are standards of conduct, beauty, efficiency or worth that a person endorses and that he tries to live up to or maintain. They do not exist in and of themselves, but are reflected in specific value claims that individuals make.

The Teaching of Values

Can we justify the teaching of particular values in the classroom? Can we justify a teacher's requiring that certain rules of order be obeyed? punishing students? expelling them? What about particular ways of thinking? What about the teaching of certain subject matter (e.g., sex education or comparative political philosophies)? If so, on what basis?

The teaching of many values can be logically and empirically justified if teachers are to do their jobs. Specific rules of order in the classroom, for example, must be established if teachers are to teach at all. As Scriven (4) has remarked, "the idea of public education does not merely encourage, it presupposes sufficient discipline to enable the teacher and pupils to perform their assigned roles--and so of course it requires the imposition on the student by the teacher of a very definite behavioral value-system. And either expulsion or corporal punishment of the trouble-makers may have to be part of the teacher's repetoire if he or she is to discharge this fundamental obligation to the other student and the society. The justification of this kind of value-conclusion, in certain circumstances, is perfectly straightforward." (p. 12).

The teaching of certain procedural values, such as logical or critical thinking, is also essential to pedagogical effectiveness. If we want students, for example, to be able to evaluate rationally various conclusions and recommendations to which they are exposed during their lifetime, we must of necessity teach them the value of rational analysis, since it is pretty unlikely that they will learn this elsewhere. If we want them to base their actions on empirically-supported conclusions (i.e., those conclusions for which the most supporting facts exist), we must of necessity teach them the value of objectivity (as opposed to intuition, revelation, common-sense, etc.) as the best means of arriving at such conclusions.

Teachers must be clear in their own minds, however, as to why they are insisting that certain ways of proceeding or behaving be followed or practiced rather than other ways. Here again, teachers must choose and then defend their choice. In this case, the particular ways of behaving or proceeding that they are requiring in the classroom. It is certainly conceivable (and likely) that different teachers will choose differently. The important thing for any teacher, however, is to be clear about why he has chosen certain behaviors and/or procedures over others, and to be able to give logical and just (i.e., fair) reasons for his choice. If a teacher cannot explain the reasoning behind a chosen procedure or behavior that he is requiring of students, it seems unlikely, to say the least, that doubting students will consider the procedure or behavior as having value for them.

The procedures or behaviors a teacher endorses, however, must not only be defended, but must also be defensible. Now, I think it impossible to justify first principles in any "absolute" or "final" sense. Both Scriven (5) and Kohlberg (6), however, have argued cogently and clearly that there is one fundamental principle that appears defensible as a basis for justifying the desirability of other values and specific acts. It is the principle of prima facie equality of rights or justice. Scriven (5) argues that this principle can be justified both politically and directly,--politically in terms of the fact that we, as a nation, are supposedly committed to it. It is listed first among the values identified in the Preamble to the United States Constitution (We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice..." and cited in most systems of religious ethics (Treat others as you would like to be treated); and directly, by comparing the advantages and disadvantages of an equal allocation of rights with any and all alternatives in terms of their effects upon the individuals in any society or group which embraces these alternatives (4, p. 8).

The principle of equal rights means that all parties to a dispute or disagreement have an equal claim to consideration though not necessarily to equal treatment. Unequal treatment, however, can be justified only when it can be shown to be necessary to protect the claims of all the individuals involved. Equal rights means equal consideration of one's position or argument, not necessarily equal treatment in a specific situation, since there may be good reasons

for giving greater preference to some rather than to others. "When the constitution of a country or of an organization of countries talks about all people's being equal, it does not imply that they are all equally strong, intelligent, or virtuous, and it does not imply that they should receive equal incomes; it simply means that they have equal rights, i.e., they must be given equal consideration in the formulation and application of the law of the land and the actions of its government and people." (5, p. 242).

The principle of equal consideration, therefore, does not mean that every student will be <u>treated</u> equally. Some, depending on their ability or aptitude, may need less or more attention than others. This <u>is</u> unequal treatment. But it is based on the principle of equal consideration and thus fair. It would not be fair for a teacher to spend as much time with a student who does not need his assistance as with one who does.

If one accepts justice as a fundamental principle, specific procedural or behavioral values become defensible, but only to the extent that they provide for equal consideration; only if they do not conflict with other values of the teacher that he considers more just; and only if they do not conflict with any values of students which are themselves more just. Given these stipulations the teaching of such values is justified.

This does not mean, however, that we teach the students to <u>accept our conclusion</u> that a particular way of behaving or proceeding is good because we tell them that it is. We should expect and encourage

in order to determine if they are worth endorsing themselves.

It is in this regard that teaching students to distinguish among different types of value claims becomes so important. Unless students understand the difference between personal value-claims, market value-claims and real value-claims, or to put it another way, between what individuals prefer as a matter of taste; what groups of people like; and estimates of worth based on a certain set of applicable criteria, they cannot begin to go about attempting to verify the truth of a particular value-claim. Let us consider each of these types of claims a bit further.

Personal value-claims, as reflected in the statement "I prefer chocolate ice-cream to other kinds of ice-cream," [are indications of taste.] When an individual states that he prefers chocolate ice cream to other kinds of ice cream, he is not claiming that everyone should think so, he is merely indicating what he personally prefers.

Market value claims refer to the kind of statement a person makes when he is trying to convey what a certain object (a stamp, a house, a painting) is worth in the open marketplace of buyers and sellers at a particular time. It is a generalized estimate of the probability that somebody will come along who will pay a given price (or close to it) for the object. It is of course possible that no one will come along to pay this price (e.g. $150,000 for an original Renoir). It is also possible that the generalized estimate of what the object is worth will change over time (e.g. the market value of a particular house may fluctuate over time) But market value claims are not merely matters of taste

or matters of opinion. The market value of an object is determined by comparing the prices at which objects w/similar characteristics have (or have not) sold in the market. Such claims tell us something about the inclination of fairly large groups of people to pay a certain amount of money in order to obtain things for which they have a liking.

Real Value Claims assert that a certain thing is better (i.e., of greater worth or merit) than other conceivable and available alternatives according to a particular set of criteria (e.g., money, energy, time, some combination of these, etc.) An individual making such a claim is not referring to the common (or even expert) opinion of what a particular thing is worth, nor is he merely expressing a personal opinion. He is claiming that a certain item or idea (or group of items or ideas) is better than another item or idea because all things considered, it outweighs its alternatives in terms of certain criteria deemed important. Hence, the statement that the most durable kind of leather is Brand X represents a real value claim. So when a teacher claims that discussion is a better method of teaching social studies than lecture because (students stay attentive longer, or interest is higher, etc.) he is claiming something for the discussion method that the lecture method does not possess. He is not merely stating a personal preference, nor is he expressing what teachers as a whole like.

Moral value claims represent a particular kind of real value claim--claims involving the area of morality. "The domain of morality is simply the domain which is concerned with assessments of actions, attitudes, and...behavior that may affect other people, judged from

a particular point of view." (5, p. 12) This point of view is, as mentioned earlier, the point of view of equal consideration, defensible both politically and practically.

The argument for procedural and behavioral values applies to non-pedagogical values as well. Teaching students simply to accept the conclusions of others without understanding the reasons behind these conclusions has a long history of ineffectiveness. Techniques such as emotional pleas, appeals to conscience, slogans, preaching, rewards ("gold stars") and setting "good examples" simply don't work very well.

When we teach students that a particular action, idea, or way or thinking is good (or bad) without helping them to understand why we think it so, we do them a disservice, since we are not helping them to learn how to evaluate the conclusions of others in order to assess their applicability to themselves.

If we wish to help students learn to evaluate conclusions for themselves rather than blindly to accept them because their source is one of friendship, power, or prestige, therefore, we will not teach them that a particular value-claim (e.g., that schoolchildren should be bused, or that war should be eliminated) is good or bad, right or wrong, because we or others (the church, the government, the Republican party) think so. We will teach them to seek out <u>the reasons why</u> the advocates (whomever they are) of a particular claim think a specified action is good or bad (i.e., to identify the consequence or outcomes the advocates believe will occur as

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<u>circumstances and in that situation</u> is just or not. An action unjust at one time may be just at another. Hence, lastly, we will teach them the meaning of justice, the fact that it is the basic principle upon which our society is based and its potential usefulness as a universally applicable principle. Kohlberg (7) is most clear in this regard.

> Justice is not a rule or a set of rules, it is a moral principle. By a moral principle, we mean a mode of choosing which is universal, a rule of choosing which we want all people to adopt always in all situations. We know it is all right to be dishonest and steal to save a life because it is just, because a man's right to life comes before another man's right to property. We know it is sometimes right to kill, because it is sometimes just. The Germans who tried to kill Hitler were doing right because respect for the equal values of lives demands that we kill someone murdering others in order to save their lives. There are exceptions to rules, then, but no exceptions to principles. A moral obligation is an obligation to respect the right or claim of another person. A moral principle is a principle for resolving competing claims, you versus me, you versus a third person. There is only one principled basis for resolving claims, justice or equality. Treat every man's claim impartially regardless of the man. A moral principle is not only a rule of action but a reason for action. As a reason for action, justice is called respect for persons.

If a particular real value-claim, therefore, can be shown on the basis of logic and considerable supporting evidence, along with a lack of much evidence to the contrary, to result in unjust consequences (e.g., the hoarding of food when people nearby are starving) at a particular time and place, then we quite properly may consider and teach it to be a bad or wrong claim. It is to be emphasized,

however, that we teach as facts only those claims which really can be objectively established, such as the ineffectiveness of the death penality; other claims we teach as hypotheses. This allows us to teach the truth or falsity of a given value claim (depending on the extent to which it is supported or refuted by evidence available to all), without violating the rights of our students to choose among conflicting claims when the evidence is not known or is inconclusive.

This, of course, does not mean that an action considered good (or bad) now may not be reversed in the future, should evidence as yet undiscovered so indicate. As Scriven points out, "the death penalty and the use of cigarettes may have to be reassessed in the light of new evidence but that in no way justifies tentativeness in discussing their present status, which is exceptionally clear and well-documented with respect to many (though naturally not all) of the most important questions about them." (4, p. 17) Those claims for which no evidence exists at present to indicate that one alternative is better than another, we teach as hypotheses to be investigated and then accepted or rejected, depending on whether supportive or refutative evidence is eventually found. We openly admit that neither the claim nor its alternatives can be supported or refuted at this time, pointing out that data not presently in existence are needed before we can make a recommendation, and suggesting that empirical trials of each alternative be carried out forthwith.

One further point needs to be considered. If we want students to be able to understand and to assess various value-claims that they come across, we must help them to identify and empathize with the feelings of others, particularly those of different life styles and cultures. Many techniques for this already exist, such as role-playing, role-switching, projecting the consequences of the behavior patterns of significant others, field trips, etc. Such experiences must be followed by having students discuss and analyze their feelings about these experiences. Value education includes both cognitive and affective components. These components cannot be inseparated except artifically for the purposes of pedagogical analysis.

In short, then, I am arguing that we can teach values, we do teach values, and we should teach values. The central question remains one of specifying criteria by which to assess the validity of teaching certain values rather than others.

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